

SUMMARY

The Field Sparrow arrives from March 22 to April 15 in the region of Battle Creek and leaves for the south between October 12 and 27. The nesting season extends from May 1 until the last week in August, probably two or more broods being reared in a year. Three and four are the average number of eggs. These average about 1.6 grams in weight. The young weigh about 1.1 grams or a little more when hatching and when ready to leave the nest weight about 10.5 grams. The female does the feeding according to my observations. The young remain in the nest six to eight days.

REFERENCES

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BATTLE CREEK, MICH.

 RESTORATION OF ROADSIDE COVER BY THE C.C.C.

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Much of the roadside beauty of the Illinois prairies has yielded to agriculture and commerce. The bushy hedge row with its diversity of plants and seasonal color changes has been replaced by the prosaic wire fence: highway cuts have hastened erosion and many of the trees have made way for the hot dog stand and the oil station. These newer uses of the roadside have been accompanied by less obvious changes. Grasses which become highly inflammable in dry seasons have supplanted the hedge row. The only recreation the road now affords is down the concrete slab, and wildlife, once a natural part of the fence row, has disappeared. The roadside has become, in many instances, drab and dreary. For the most part it is uninteresting.

East of St. Charles, Illinois, the State Highway Department has acquired rights of way two hundred feet deep and fourteen miles long, upon which was built U. S. Highway 64. A World War veterans company of the Civilian Conservation Corps, under the direction of the U. S. National Park Service, is engaged upon a program of highway beautification and roadside utilization on this strip. Power line poles, bill boards, fences, and structures are being removed. Grading, erosion control, elimination of blind intersections, construction of wayside trails and small bridges, and an extensive planting program are being undertaken by the C.C.C. in an effort to restore the former



FIG. 18. Showing artificial changes in road margins. Top, example of original roadside condition; middle, showing the C.C.C. crew sloping the bank preparatory to planting; lower, a finished piece of roadside, after it has been graded and planted.

beauty, give the roadside some recreational values such as hiking and horseback riding, and eliminate the sordid appearance which so often characterizes highways near cities.

While this project was essentially designed to improve the scenery along the thoroughfare, the planting program gives it significance as a cover restoration measure. Upon two fourteen-mile strips of prairie, which have been denuded of song bird and small mammal cover, native vines, shrubs, and trees are being replaccd. Many species of native plants having known value as food and cover are being used in an informal planting scheme. In time, the result will be a double row of thicket and woodland, with occasional short breaks for vistas and road intersections.

Due regard is being given to ecological associations and as much diversity as is consistent with natural groupings is being observed in the plantings. Willows, red osier dogwoods, and other moisture loving plants will again grow on the banks of the few streams crossing the highway. On the drier upland soils the plant material will be as carefully selected. Groves of shade trees will be flanked by shrubby growth when such conditions would be found naturally. Occasionally there will be dense tangles of vines. The finished job will have little formality about it, except at road intersections where low growing shrubs will be used, as trees would tend to create conditions dangerous to the automobile driver. It will not be possible to make more than a skeletal planting, but as time goes on natural reproduction will fill the voids and other plants desirable to some of the small forms of wildlife, will undoubtedly find their way into the scheme.

It is known that an acre of fence row supports a heavier population of certain birds and small mammals than do many acres of solid cover. What the effect of this project will be on song birds we can only conjecture, but it seems plausible to assume that this, as well as a number of similar projects directed by the National Park Service, will do much towards increasing bird life in the immediate vicinity. It is hoped that the project, in addition to its objective of pioneer highway beautification, will serve as a demonstration and as an example for restoring roadside cover.

U. S. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA.